



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
NEVADA STATE OFFICE OF ENERGY

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NSOE Hopes to Fill Nevada's Wind Energy "Hole in the Donut"

When you look at a map of utility-scale wind energy projects in the United States, Nevada is the only western state without one. The Nevada State Office of Energy ("NSOE") hopes to change this by mediating between parties on some proposed projects which could result in a tremendous economic impact to the state and close Nevada's "hole in the donut" of all its surrounding states having at least 128 megawatts of wind power capacity at the end of 2010.

"We are working with the developers, interested stakeholders and local governments on several proposed wind projects to understand the variety of environmental, economic and workforce issues because we realize the huge economic potential these projects could have in our state," NSOE Director Stacey Crowley said. "We are confident that we can establish a process to bring everyone together and openly discuss the benefits and impacts of developing the wind resources in our state."

According to the American Wind Energy Association, the first quarter of 2011 saw more than 1,100 megawatts of wind power capacity installed in the U.S. (more than double the capacity installed in the first quarter of 2010), the U.S. wind industry has added more than 35 percent of all new generating capacity over the past four years (more than nuclear and coal combined), and U.S. wind power capacity represents more than 20 percent of the world's installed wind power.

Pattern Energy recently announced they had broken ground on Spring Valley, a 150-megawatt wind project in White Pine County. Other potential wind projects in Nevada include 200-megawatt China Mountain in Elko County, 200-megawatt Searchlight Wind in Clark County, 150-megawatt Virginia Peak in Washoe County, and 450-megawatt Wilson Creek Wind in Lincoln County.

Nevada's abundance of federally-owned land begets a stringent review of all potential impacts renewable energy projects may have on public lands. For example, if the greater sage grouse wild bird gets listed on the Endangered Species Act of 1973, then land development or disturbance will be subject to endangered species regulations. This could pose an increased risk to the success of development of transmission lines and/or renewable energy projects.

During this year's Legislative session, Governor Sandoval signed Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 3, which urges proactive protection and restoration of the population and habitat of the sage grouse in Nevada. "This resolution, along with careful review of renewable energy development, should lead to projects that are good for the state both economically and environmentally," Crowley added.

The NSOE is also developing a working relationship with the Bureau of Land Management on renewable energy projects. "We have been tasked to coordinate with the BLM to try and expedite the permitting process to make sure it is as smooth as possible," Crowley said. "It's amazing what you can do when you sit down together and talk about the issues."

Indiana, for example, has seen a tremendous boost from wind power after installing 1337 megawatts of capacity between 2008 and 2010. The \$2.6 billion investment resulted in more than 400 construction jobs, \$3.1 million in annual property taxes, and an influx of money to Indiana-based businesses in difficult economic times.

"We hope to have a similar success story in Nevada," Crowley added. "We look forward to working with all of the interested parties to find the best path to get there."

Learn more about all NSOE programs at www.energy.nv.gov.

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